



Opioids and the Courts News: April 24, 2018

National

[SJI Newsletter](#)

State Justice Institute

The SJI-supported National Judicial Opioid Task Force recently added more members and, in an effort to reach a wider audience, established an [Opioids and the Courts website](#).

Hosted by the [National Center for State Courts](#) (NCSC), and formed in September 2017 by the [Conference of Chief Justices](#) (CCJ) and the [Conference of State Court Administrators](#) (COSCA), the Task Force recently added 20 new members from all areas of the criminal justice system, including attorneys, judges, probation officers, and children and family services representatives.

National

[Trump administration extending opioid emergency declaration](#)

Politico

The Trump administration is extending an emergency declaration for the opioid crisis after accomplishing little under the order since it was announced three months ago.

A notice posted to the HHS website Friday said acting Secretary Eric Hargan would extend the public health emergency, which was originally declared in late October. The order was originally set to expire Tuesday.

National

[Editorial: An Opioid Crisis Foretold](#)

New York Times

Today's opioid crisis is already the deadliest drug epidemic in American history. Opioid overdoses killed more than 45,000 people in the 12 months that ended in September, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The epidemic is now responsible for nearly as many American deaths per year as AIDS was at the peak of that crisis.



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New Hampshire

['On the brink of collapse': Hillsborough County prosecutor requests \\$500K budget increase](#)

NewHampshire.com

Courts lack drug abuse resources, too.

It's not only prosecutors who complain about a lack of resources in Hillsborough County.

Last week, at a Concord panel discussion on the legal system's response to the opioid crisis in New Hampshire, a Superior Court judge said the services available to help offenders with addiction issues can vary widely from county to county.

Judge Jacalyn Colburn said that in Hillsborough County, where she sits, "My menu is very limited."

Hosted by the University of New Hampshire Law School and the state bar association, the program focused on how drug and family courts deal with offenders with substance abuse issues.

Audriana Mekula-Hanson of Concord, who will graduate from the law school next month and start work as a prosecutor, asked the panelists, "What alternative sentencing would you suggest that I can provide for the defendants who don't meet the qualifications for drug court but certainly have a drug-addiction problem?"

In some counties, Colburn replied, "You have a fairly broad menu of options" for low-level offenders with substance-use disorders. "But," she said, "for the largest county in the state, with the two largest cities — and presumably the highest number of (overdose) deaths again this year just like the last three years — my menu options are very thin."

There are no court diversion programs or pre-trial services, Colburn said.

Tina Nadeau, chief justice of the Superior Court, said ideally, all offenders should have risk/need assessments done so they can be provided the appropriate services.



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New Hampshire

[UNH School of Law Holds Panel Of NH Judges Discussing Opioid Epidemic](#)

New Hampshire Public Radio

Three judges provided first-hand experiences of how the epidemic affects their courtrooms.

One of them was Superior Court Judge Jacalyn Colburn, who serves the Hillsborough County Southern District. She says she now spends about one day a week working on drug court cases.

"It's illustrative of the fact that the epidemic has had a great impact on the criminal justice system when one-fifth or 20 percent of a judge's work is dedicated to nothing but adult drug court," Colburn said.

Colburn says there are now 10 drug courts operating in the state, which focus on treatment as an alternative to incarceration. She says that, in the last few years, the goal has been to expand the use of drug courts.

But at an event focused on opioids, Colburn noted that her cases are not all related to the same type of substance abuse. "We're seeing a spike in methamphetamine [and] we're seeing a spike in crack cocaine," Colburn said.

North Carolina

[New Plans to Address NC's Opioid Crisis](#)

North Carolina Court System

Attorney General Jeff Sessions addressed the national opioid crisis during a visit to Raleigh on Tuesday. Chief Justice Mark Martin, Chief District Court Judge Jay Corpening (District 5 – New Hanover and Pender counties), and District Attorney Kimberly Robb (District 3A – Pitt County, and president of the N.C. Conference of District Attorneys) were among those in attendance, joining with other state leaders to promote a cohesive local, state, and national effort to prevent and combat opioid addiction.

Chief Justice Martin is a member of the Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative and has directed the N.C. Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) to coordinate anti-opioid efforts with the Governor and Attorney General. Four North Carolina communities are in the top 20 cities in the United States suffering with opioid abuse.



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North Carolina

[Opioid Abuse in North Carolina Fact Sheet](#)

North Carolina Court System

Opioid abuse is a serious issue that claims the life of a North Carolinian every day and impacts many more through motor vehicle accidents. The economic burden is staggering, costing the country billions of dollars every year.

Ohio

[Solutions from local opioid forums presented to state leaders](#)

WHIO

While there is evidence that efforts like drug courts, needle exchanges, rapid response teams, comprehensive drug education in schools, and coordination between jails and treatment providers have worked to improve outcomes for those with substance abuse disorders, those solutions are embraced only sporadically.

“(We) saw differences in death rates between two similar counties where one had medically assisted treatment through drug court and the other did not,” Doug Oplinger [Director of Your Voice Ohio], said. “We detected tension in some communities.”

Tennessee

[AOC Director Tate, Judge Slone Speak at National Association of Attorneys General Meeting](#)

WGNS News Radio

Administrative Office of the Courts Director Deborah Taylor Tate recently moderated an opioid-related discussion at the National Association of Attorneys General’s Southern Regional Meeting. Also participating as one of four panelists in the discussion was Judge Duane Slone, who serves in the Fourth District. The discussion came in a segment of the conference titled Opioid Addiction – Crisis and Trends.

In late January 2018, Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam announced a plan to attack the state’s opioid problem. TN Together takes a three-pronged approach that focuses on prevention, treatment, and law enforcement to combat the epidemic sweeping across the state. The plan also incorporates all three branches of government in the fight against opioids.

Both Director Tate and Judge Slone have been regional and national leaders in the battle against opioid addiction. Director Tate is currently serving as co-chair of the National Opioid Task Force created by the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA). The task force has been working to find solutions,



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examine current efforts, and make recommendations related to the opioid epidemic's ongoing impact on the justice system.